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SUBJECT: STAND UP AND BE COUNTED: CHAD'S 2009 POPULATION CENSUS BEGINS; USG CONTRIBUTES \$1.3 MILLION

¶1. Summary: Chad's second post-independence population census kicked off May 19 with registration of the President. The census is a necessary precondition for national elections in 2010 and 2011, and will facilitate donor planning for development assistance. The USG has contributed \$1.5 million which will be disbursed through the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). Post wishes to thank the regional USAID office in Accra for the procurement assistance it provided for the grant award. End summary.

¶2. Chad's second population census in almost 50 years of post-independence history got under way May 20 as President Idriss Deby Itno was registered at the presidential palace by the Director General of the census bureau. Prime Minister Youssouf Saleh Abbas was registered shortly afterwards at his office in the presence of Chad's Minister of Economy and Planning, who has overall responsibility for census organization. Chad's last census, which received high marks for its technical soundness, took place in 1993 when there was a population of 6.3 million.

¶3. A previous effort in 2003 to carry out the next census within ten years could not be organized due largely to a lack of funding. Since then, Chad's overall economic situation has improved with the availability of oil revenues, while the donor community has come to realize the magnitude of the handicap it must face attempting to plan development projects without reliable demographic data. The European Union, Swiss Cooperation, UN agencies (UNFPA, UNICEF, UNDP) and the U.S. have all committed resources to the 2009 census whose estimated budget stands at \$25.4 million. The GOC has committed to covering 50 per cent of the census budget.

¶4. Despite the relatively modest size of its bilateral assistance program in Chad, Post recognized the importance of credible census figures for development planning as well as to serve as a baseline for the upcoming round of elections. It therefore made a commitment of \$150,000 in September 2007 shortly after the GOC issued an appeal. Chad's Minister of Economy and Planning fondly recalls how the U.S. was the first of Chad's friends to respond to this call for help. A more substantial contribution to the census effort was made by the U.S. with the recent May 15 signature of a USAID grant agreement to UNFPA in the amount of \$1,275,000. Post wishes to commend the USAID regional office in Accra, Ghana for its expedient handling of this procurement action which allowed the grant to be awarded May 19, just in time for the May 20 commencement of census operations. A modest but meaningful signing ceremony of the grant agreement was organized by Chad's Economic and Planning Minister May 19 which also involved the UNFPA Resident Representative and the Ambassador. The event received good coverage by the broadcast media.

¶5. To be accurate, several preliminary census operations have already been undertaken and completed these past few

months by the census bureau, including large-scale procurement of vehicles and office equipment, mapping (administrative boundaries, village locations), testing of sample questionnaires and training of census agents. The actual counting of Chad's population will occur between May 20 and June 4. Data compilation and analysis will follow. With the end of the rainy season in September/October, an electoral census will then be conducted, possibly with the use of biometrics. Municipal and legislative elections are expected to occur in early 2010, followed by presidential elections in 2011. Completion of the population census is therefore a key component to the upcoming election cycle. Several of the major opposition parties which boycotted previous elections had insisted that the population census and the electoral census be included as necessary preconditions for their participation in the August 13, 2007 Agreement brokered by the European Union with the GOC. Through this recent grant award of \$1,275,000 to the census, Post has contributed to a very practical but necessary operation that will promote political competition while providing the baseline data to guide our development efforts.

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